

Amendments To The Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any cancelled claims at a later date.

- 1.-11. (canceled)
12. (new) A media gateway of a packet-based communication network, comprising:
a data channel controller which controls a data channel of a first communication connection;
a terminator that terminates a signaling message of a second communication connection; and
a connection controller that performs a first part of a connection control function for a third communication connection and authorizes a central network controller to carry out a second part of the connection control function.
13. (new) The media gateway according to Claim 12, wherein the connection controller performs connection control functions which do not need to be carried out centrally within the network.
14. (new) The media gateway according to Claim 13, wherein the connection controller performs connection control functions which are time-critical.
15. (new) The media gateway according to Claim 13, wherein the connection controller performs all connection control functions do not need to be carried out centrally within the network.
16. (new) The media gateway according to Claims 12, wherein a set of subscriber data is managed.
17. (new) The media gateway according to Claims 16, wherein the set of subscriber data is stored.

18. (new) A media gateway according to Claim 12, wherein a set of charge data for a communication connection is recorded.

19. (new) A media gateway according to Claim 12, wherein an access control protocol is used for communicating with the central network controller.

20. (new) A media gateway according to Claim 12, wherein a SIP protocol is used for communicating with the central network controller.

21. (new) A media gateway according to Claim 12, wherein a connection control message intended for a second media gateway is sent to the second media gateway via the central network controller.

22. (new) A controller in a packet-based communication network for connection control which carries out connection control functions centrally in the network for a communication connections, comprising:
a media gateway operatively attached to the controller,
wherein the controller receives a task for performing the connection control from the media gateway, the controller either carries out the tasks itself or controls further execution of the tasks instead of the media gateways.

23. (new) A method for handling a communication connection in a packet-based network, comprising:
receiving an incoming signaling message from a circuit selected from the group consisting of subscriber circuit, connection circuit, and combinations thereof;
evaluating the incoming signaling;
performing a first part of a connection control by a media gateway; and
authorizing by the media gateway a central network controller to perform a second part of a connection control.

24. (new) The method according to Claim 23, wherein the circuit is not using a SS7 signaling protocol.

25. (new) The method according to Claim 23, wherein the circuit is using a SS7 signaling protocol, a user part in the SS7 signaling protocol is received and evaluated by a media gateway after lower protocol layers have been processed by a central network controller which includes a centralized signaling gateway function.